

Adopt a Classroom

Jewel Cave National Monument has adopted the graduating Class of 2016 from the Custer School District. The school district is located within the nearby Gateway Community of Custer, South Dakota. This programming effort complements the thematic area of Advancing the NPS Education Mission within the recent Call to Action Plan of the National Park Service. Yet, it is important to note that this educational partnership has successfully taken place since 2008.

The program is based on a monthly activity schedule, with a different educational topic planned and presented each month. Ranging from lesson plans that highlight the natural and cultural history of the Monument to exposing the students to an array of science-based projects, the Class of 2016 learns about the significance of the resource.

Why was this grade level selected? The National Park Service celebrates its 100-year anniversary in 2016. For this reason, it was decided awhile back that the Monument needed to create a lasting legacy with some youth in the Custer community. The Monument feels a strong passion for its neighboring towns, and this programming effort is one way to return a sense of commitment to the local school district.

January 2012 / Does the NPS Protect and Provide?

On August 25, 1916, federal legislation created the Organic Act. This law is the foundation for the National Park Service. This legislation provides strict guidance on how the NPS manages its natural and cultural resources.

The law states that the National Park Service is to accomplish two things:

1. *To conserve (protect) the scenery, natural and historical objects, and the wild life.*
2. *To provide enjoyment of these same resources.*

This program causes students to take an active part in discussing the reasoning for the National Park Service. Through a debate-like format, students will understand the complexity of managing a significant resource, while trying to maintain balance with the “dual mission.”

February 2012 / What Happens on the Surface, Stays on the Surface

The National Park Service is responsible for preserving and protecting significant resources. Yet, unlike many NPS sites with breathtaking scenery or rich cultural artifacts, Jewel Cave National Monument was set aside for awe-inspiring resources underground. However, to fully protect the cave, surface resources have to be managed properly.

During this program, students will learn that various uses of public and private lands can affect a cave area. Pollutants or chemicals, such as fertilizers and insecticides, from the surface can make their way into cave systems. With personal awareness, students will understand the reasons for specific surface management techniques at the Monument.

March 2012 / It Takes a “Team” to Protect Jewel Cave (Field Trip)

Like many public land agencies, the National Park Service strives toward reducing its carbon footprint and leading by example with sustainable practices. In collaboration with the Green Team of the Monument,

students will witness firsthand what actions are taking place to make Jewel Cave National Monument a sustainable site. Taking ranger-guided tours of the facilities, including the cave, students will be able to note the positive changes on site. Followed by a quick activity that asks the question, what can I do for my National Parks, students will take home a strong message of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

April 2012 / Meet a Cave Mapper

Tag-teaming with the Paha Sapa Grotto (local caving club), Jewel Cave National Monument will show students what it is like to explore and discover cave areas. With firsthand accounts of caving trips from cave explorers, students will understand the lust for venturing into the unknown and perhaps mapping one of the world's last frontiers. With the information learned, they will use the methods and dedication needed to map a mock cave system in the classroom.

For further information on the monthly activities and how they relate to South Dakota State Standards, please check out the 2012 Teacher Guide attached below.